

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

FOUR SCORE YEARS AGO

WHY IT WAS NECESSARY FOR SIX TO PERFECT AND LEGALIZE THE ACT.

Eighty years have rolled away since the advent upon earth in the last dispensation of the body of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Four score years, coming next Wednesday, have passed since a little band of 113 men, led by the Prophet Joseph Smith, gathered at the residence of Peter Whitmer, Sr., in Fayette, Seneca county, New York, and under the laws of the state of New York and with singleness of purpose to the glory of God, effected the organization which was to be the nucleus of the church of Jesus Christ, as made known to them by revelation from on high.

It was on April 6, 1830, that the Church was organized. Now, on April 6, 1910, 80 years after the humble beginning with a following of only half a dozen devoted members, the gospel light has spread until the organization now numbers in its fold somewhere in the neighborhood of 400,000 souls. Eighty years of devotion, of persecution, of fidelity and of progress, have marked the development of the Church, and though the powers of Satan and the conspiring of evil-doing men have combined seeking its downfall, yet the movement of the Church has been upward and onward until nearly half a million people subscribe to its tenets and almost the entire civilized world has become familiar with its teachings.

The eightieth annual conference of the Church convenes in the tabernacle tomorrow. Among the tens of thousands who will attend that conference only a very few remain who remember the men who were present at the organization of the Church. All of the original six have long since passed away, and those who were associated with them in the later activities of their lives are themselves, in the natural order of things, one by one, passing the final summons. But the work they accomplished lives after them, and the Church they assisted in founding continues to flourish like the green bay tree. The memory of the six original members, however, who gave to the world the Church organization, will be ever given in the hearts of their devoted followers for they have an abiding faith that the principles promulgated by them sustained the power of God unto salvation. These six men were



JOSEPH SMITH.

Joseph Smith, the prophet; Oliver Cowdery, the second elder in the Church; Hyrum Smith, the first patriarch; Samuel H. Smith, brother to the prophet; David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, and Peter Whitmer, Jr.

TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW.

The question has often been asked, why the Church was organized with only six members, when there were nine who had been baptized and had become communicants according to the revelations given through Joseph Smith. The explanation has been offered that perhaps at the time it was inconvenient to secure the attendance of more than this number at the time of organization. The day had been designated to the prophet when the Church should complete its organization, and it has been suggested that only the six members were within reach when the time came. Allowing this to be true, there is no doubt that the number in attendance upon that occasion was not alone for that reason, but in compliance with the legal requirements of the statutes of the state of New York, which were explicit in their provisions with relation to the organization and incorporation of religious societies. It is apparent that Joseph Smith and his fellow members were amply cognizant of the provisions of the law on this head, that a minimum of six members was required to be in attendance to transact the business of a religious body.

SIX, THE REQUIRED NUMBER.

Under the religious corporations law of the state of New York, special provisions are made for the incorporation and government of Protestant Episcopal parishes or churches, as well as for the Roman Catholic and Greek churches, Reformed Dutch, Presbyterian, Reformed Presbyterian and Evangelical Lutheran churches, for Baptist churches, for Congregational and Independent churches, and for churches of other denominations.

Under the law certificates of incorporation in the Roman or Greek churches must be made by the archbishop or bishop, the vicar general of the diocese, the rector of the church and two laymen. For the Reformed Dutch and Reformed Presbyterian churches, the ministers, elders and deacons are required to certify the or-

Copy of Original Copyright to the First Edition of Book of Mormon.

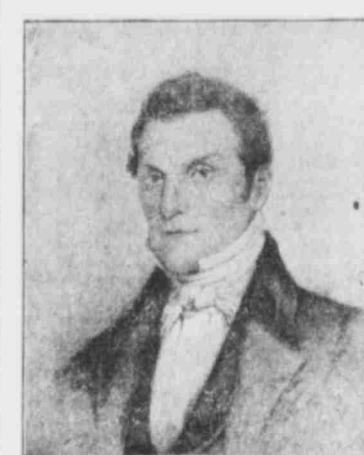
Herewith presented is a copy of the original copyright paper issued to Joseph Smith, Jr., on the first edition of the Book of Mormon. The original manuscript, yellow with age, too discolored to reproduce in halftone, is in the possession of the Historian's office. It bears on its face the reason why the Prophet signed himself as "author and proprietor" of the Book of Mormon, as being necessary in conformity with the law in relation to copyright. The document is as follows:

Northern district of New York to Wit:

Be it remembered, that on the eleventh day of June, in the fifty third year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1829, Joseph Smith, Jr., of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit: "The Book of Mormon; an account written by the hand of Mormon, upon plates taken from the plates of Nephi. Wherefore it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi; and also of the Lamanites; written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile; written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. Written, and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed; to come forth by the gift of the power of God, unto the interpretation thereof; sealed by the hand of Mormon, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of Gentile; the interpretation thereof by the gift of God; and abridgment taken from the Book of Ether. Also, which is a record of the people of Jared, which were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the languages of the people when they were building a tower to get to heaven; which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel, how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off for ever; and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile, that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting Himself unto all nations. And now if there be fault, it be the mistake of men; wherefore condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment seat of Christ.—By Joseph Smith, Jun. Author and Proprietor."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also the act entitled, "An act supplementary to an act, entitled, 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the works of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

Clerk of the Northern District of New York.



HYRUM SMITH.

tection exist the country over. The statute provided then, as it does now, that the benefits of copyright on "maps, charts and books," were secured "to the authors and proprietors of such copies," as given in the certificate of copyright issued to Joseph Smith on the Book of Mormon by R. R. Lansing, clerk of the northern district of New York, a copy of the original document being presented herewith. For the purpose of complying with the law and for obtaining the benefits and protection of the copyright law, Joseph Smith attached the words, "author and proprietor" to his name on the title page.

PREFACE TO BOOK OF MORMON.

That he did not claim to be actually the author of the book, is amply shown in the preface to the same edition, which appears on the page immediately following the title page. In the preface, Joseph states clearly and emphatically that he translated the work, through the gift and power of God, repeating the statement before concluding his prefatory remarks. The preface to the first edition is as follows:

"To the Reader:

"As many false reports have been circulated respecting the following work, and also many unlawful measures taken by evil designing persons to destroy me, and also the work, I would inform you that I translated, by the gift and power of God, and caused to be written, one hundred and sixteen pages, the which I took from the book of Lehi, which was an account abridged from the plates of Lehi, by the hand of Mormon, which account some persons or persons have stolen and kept from me, notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again—and being commanded of the Lord that I should not translate the same over again, for Satan had put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God, by altering the words, that they did read contrary from that which I translated and caused to be written; and if I should bring forth the same words again, or, in other words, if I should translate the same over again, they would publish that which they had stolen, and Satan would stir up the hearts of this generation, that they might not receive this work; but behold, the Lord saith unto me, I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing; therefore thou shalt translate from the plates of Nephi, until ye come to that which ye have translated, which ye have retained; and, behold, ye shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will

show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil. Wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, I have, through his grace and mercy, accomplished that which he hath commanded me respecting this thing. I would also inform you that the plates of which hath been spoken were found in the town-ship of Manchester, Ontario county, New York. THE AUTHOR."

While Joseph Smith signed the preface with the words, "The Author," the fact that he did not claim to be the originator of the book is sufficiently apparent in the wording of the preface itself.

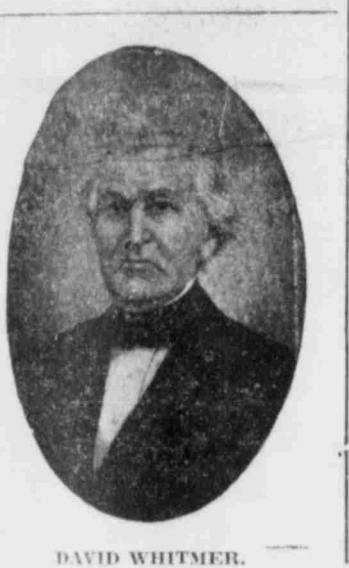
In the first edition, and also in the two succeeding editions, the testimony of the three witnesses and of the eight witnesses appears in the back of the book. In later editions, however, the testimonies were placed at the beginning of the book, and appear in this order at present.

ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT.

The original manuscript of the Book of Mormon, together with the original testimonies of the three witnesses and of the eight witnesses, has for the most part been destroyed. The MSS. were placed with numerous other articles on Oct. 2, 1841, in the box in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House, which was built with the intention of becoming a hotel. The structure was never completed, however, and after the death of the prophet, became the property of Lewis Bidamon, who married Emma Smith, the prophet's widow. Bidamon decided to remodel a portion of the old Nauvoo House, and in doing so tore down the walls above the corner stone. The box, with the priceless manuscript in it, lay around in the storms and all kinds of weather, and visitors to the old place were handed portions of the manuscript as souvenirs. The papers were almost ruined by dampness, and what few sheets remained were secured by a member of the Church and turned over to President Joseph F. Smith, who now has 29 pages of the original manuscript, being numbered from pages 3 to 22. One or two other pages are in the possession of individuals in this city, but the greater part of the manuscript was either destroyed by the dampness, lost or given away to people passing through Nauvoo after the old hotel had been abandoned. J. W. H.



OLIVER COWDERY.



DAVID WHITMER.

Mormonism as a "Body of Doctrine" A Discourse by Elder B. H. Roberts, at the Ensign Stake Conference, in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, Sunday, March 13, 1910.

(Reported by E. W. Otterstrom.)

I sincerely trust, my brethren and sisters, that we shall have, in this session of the Ensign stake conference, the same earnest influence and spirit of truth that characterized our morning session. Although I feel a little oppressed with the thought that it would be next to impossible to continue, in this session of the conference, the themes suggested by the special conditions that existed in the morning session. Here we are surrounded by new environment and practically with an entirely different congregation. Yet, if the spirit of the Lord shall be with us, on this occasion, I have no doubt but that such themes for thought will be given us as will strengthen our faith and help in our efforts to keep the commandments of the Lord.

Some time ago, within a year, at least, a gentleman of some prominence in the public life of our state felt that he had occasion to allude to our religious faith as a "body of doctrine," and in doing so I think he exhausted his skill in forming an expression of contempt for it. He said:

"I will venture it as my individual opinion, that considered as a body of doctrine, no well instructed person would give this priestly creed, the cold respect of a passing glance. It is not worth while getting vexed over such expressions as that. They do no harm to our faith, nor to our society—the Church. Such a remark may lead one to wonder if the gentleman, who has some reputation for intelligence, and especially for his ability in following to logical conclusions any investigation he may undertake—I say such a remark may lead one to wonder if the gentleman himself has paid any heed to the 'body of doctrine' to which he refers; or has he presumed to pass judgment upon it without even such a 'passing glance'—since he assumes with such air-sufficiency and pride of intellect that 'no well instructed person'—of which he is one, of course—would give it? For my own part, the only effect that this remark had upon me was to send me back in a half amused frame of mind to see if things pertaining to our creed were really as bad as that; and once more, I examined the foundations of our faith. I returned from that examination with my convictions deepened, and my respect and admiration very much increased for this body of doctrine as a contemptuously characterized by this gentleman, and my faith in it strengthened. When called upon, this afternoon, to address you, it seemed to me that I could do you no better service than to give you the benefit of an ex-

amination of our faith as a body of doctrine—so far as possible in one sitting; and this holds good whether you be strangers within our gates, or members of the Church.

APPEALS TO UNDERSTANDING.

It is a good thing, occasionally, to recur to first principles, as a means of keeping in view the whole system for which we stand. Every religion must have some sort of philosophy; it must give some accounting for things; some explanation of life and its meaning; some explanation of the universe and whether things trend. Religion must address itself to the understanding as well as to the heart, to the reason as well as to the emotions. Religion has been described by one as "morality touched with emotion," and, in some of its aspects, I think that is a very happy description of religion. But we are living in an age that asks adult questions, and religion must give adult replies. I think our faith is capable of doing that. I love it because it appeals to my understanding as well as to the emotions of my heart; and, consequently, when I heard this contemptuous reference to it, I resolved to do what I could by exposition of that faith, to show this gentleman, and those who think with him, how mistaken they were. So now to our task.

MORMON VIEW OF THE UNIVERSE

First, concerning the world itself—I mean by that expression the sum total of things, the universe. In 1832 the Prophet Joseph Smith came with this message, in one of the revelations contained in your Book of Covenants:

"All kingdoms have a law given; and there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser kingdom."

By this term "kingdom" our Prophet does not have in contemplation a number of people ruled by a king; the context reveals the fact that the prophet had in mind those great planetary systems which make up the universe. There are no "kingdoms" he had in mind; and he announces here a very wonderful doctrine, when he declares that there is no space but what has in it some one or other of these kingdoms—worlds and world-systems—and that there is no kingdom in the which there is not also extension, or space. A great scientist and scholar expressing the same truth in the following language:

"Through all eternity the infinite universe has been, and is, subject to the law of substance. The extent of the universe is infinite and unbounded. It is empty in no part, but everywhere filled with substance. The duration of the world is equally infinite and unbounded. It has no end; it is eternity." Such is the summing up of what he

calls the "law of substance," by one of the profoundest minds of Germany, Ernst Haeckel. Analyze it, and you will find it precisely the same conception as that announced by our prophet in 1832, when he said: "There is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space." I think, perhaps, it will be necessary to dwell upon that idea for a few minutes in order that we may grasp the thought in some thing of its immensity. I had a teacher, once, who was very skillful in imparting knowledge to his pupils in the matter of solving mathematical problems. The lines on which he proceeded were these: He would take a very simple example that involved the same principles that were to be applied in the more difficult problems; then he would work out the simple problem and tell us how he did it; and then, in the same manner, so I am of opinion that if we spend a short time in considering our own little solar system, perhaps it will help us form some idea of the immensity of the universe of which we speak.

It is well known to you all that our solar system is made up of what the astronomers call eight major planets and a great number of minor planets. Lying between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, that our planets in the order of their relationship of nearness to the sun, consist of Mercury, Venus, the earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, these are the eight major planets. In diameter, as are told that Mercury measures 3,200 miles; that the diameter of Venus is 7,760 miles; that the earth is 7,918 miles in diameter; that Mars is 4,200 miles in diameter; that Jupiter is 85,000 miles in diameter (while our earth is less than 8,000 miles in diameter, be it remembered); that the diameter of Saturn is 79,000 miles. Yet, take all these planets and all their satellites, wonderful and great as they are, and consider them melted down into one great sphere, and still our sun alone, the center of this planetary system, is upwards of 750 times as large as all these planets combined would be.

Let us now consider these several planets with reference to the distance at which they revolve about their primary—the sun. Mercury makes the circuit in 116 days; Venus makes the circuit in 224 days; the earth, of course, as you remember, makes the circuit in 365 days; but Mars requires 687 days in which to make the journey; while Jupiter requires 4,330 days (more than 11 years); Saturn 10,767 days (more than 29 years); Uranus, 29,660 days, or 56 years; and Neptune, 60,127 days, or about 165 years. The distances of these planets from the sun, in millions of miles, are as follows: Mercury is 36 millions of miles; Venus 67 millions; the earth 92 millions;

Mars 141 millions; Jupiter 483 millions; Saturn 875 millions; Uranus 1,770 millions; Neptune 2,746 millions of miles.

These figures and the facts they represent are given that some little idea may be conceived as to the extent of our own solar system, in comparison with contemplating its immensity and discovering that, inconceivably great as it is, it is not even so much as a corner of the universe, we may arise to a brief contemplation of still greater spaces—the depths of the universe, and their contents. You see, I am using our solar system, as the teacher referred to a moment ago used the simple problem in arithmetic, to help solve the more arduous problem of comprehending a little more clearly the immensity of the universe. Let us resume our work. Prof. Newcomb in his "Popular Astronomy" makes use of the following illustration to help the popular mind to grasp the immensity of the sidereal system:

"Turning our attention from this system to the thousands of fixed stars which stud the heavens, the first thing to be considered is their enormous distance asunder compared with the dimensions of the solar system, though the latter are themselves inconceivably great. To give an idea of the relative distances, suppose a voyager to leave New York to Liverpool, in less than a tenth of a second of an hour. Starting from the sun with this velocity, he would cross the orbits of the inner planets in rapid succession, and the outer ones more slowly, until, at the end of a single day he would reach the confines of our system, crossing the orbit of Neptune. But, though he passed eight planets the first day, he would pass none the next, for he would have to journey 18 or 20 years, without diminution of speed, before he would reach the nearest star, and would then have to continue his journey as far again before he could reach another. All the planets of our system would have vanished in the distance, in the course of the first three days, and the sun would be but an insignificant star in the firmament. The conclusion is, that our sun is one of an enormous number of self-luminous bodies scattered at such distances that years would be required to traverse the space between them, even when the voyager went at the rate we have supposed." (Newcomb's Astronomy, p. 104.)

Just now the great winter constellations are leaving our skies; still, in the evening, you may yet see Orion, above the western horizon; and following, and shining most brightly of all the stars in the firmament, the Dog

star. It is estimated by our astronomers that light travels through space at the enormous speed of 185,000 miles per second; that in about eight minutes a ray of light reaches our earth from the sun. Yet, this Dog star, to which I call your attention, is so distant from us that it requires something like 16 years for a ray of light to reach us from that distant and splendid sun; and from the familiar North star, it requires 46 years for a ray of light to reach our earth. So Samuel Kinnear, well known in England as one of the foremost thinkers in that land, tells us that this Dog star, judging from the amount of light emitted from him, is 2,000 times larger than our own sun; and he argues, that if this great primary, so many times larger than our sun, may it not be possible that the retinue of planets of which he is doubtless the center, is correspondingly greater than our planetary system.

Nobody knows, of course, how many fixed stars there are. Our astronomers tell us they number all the way from 50 to 50,000, or even hundreds of millions; and that it is not unreasonable to suppose that there are millions of these magnificent world-systems there may be beings more intelligent, more powerful than we are, and further advanced in arts and sciences and all that goes to make up superior methods of life and civilization. And if our astronomers are anywhere nearly right in relation to the scores of millions of stars, they report, and it is true that they are the centers of planetary systems, then of course of worlds such as ours, and more magnificent than ours, there are hundreds of millions. Upon this head Prof. John W. Draper says:

"Men when they look upon the countless multitudes of stars when he reflects that all he sees is only a small portion of those which exist, yet that each is a light and life-giving sun to multitudes of worlds, and that the enormous size of these various bodies and their immeasurable distance from one another, may form an estimate of the scale on which the world (universe) is constructed."

These reflections I trust will help to impress upon our minds the immensity of the universe, until we can in some measure understand the greatness of that truth announced by the Prophet Joseph, when he said: "There are many kingdoms; and there is no space in which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser space;" and the deductions of Ernest

Haeckel, when he said: "The extent of the universe is infinite and unbounded. It is empty in no part, but everywhere filled with substance. The duration of the world is equally infinite and unbounded. It has no end; it is eternity."

Mormonism recognizes certain eternal truths, necessary truths, because the opposite of them cannot be conceived of—of a ray of light, that space or extension is boundless, as one of our hymns puts it:

"If you could lie to Kolob, In the twinkling of an eye, And then continue onward, With that same speed to fly—

"Do you think that you could ever, Through all eternity, Find out the generation Where God began to be? Or see the grand beginning, Where matter first extended? Or view the last creation, Where Gods and matter end?"

You cannot limit space in any conception of it you may from—try how you will; for as soon as you fix the limitation, your mind stretches out beyond it and conceives extension beyond that point you fix upon and you may fix it as distant as you please. So, also, in relation to duration. Mormonism recognizes no limit to duration. Time is endless; there is no absolute beginning or end of time. All beginnings and endings spoken of are but relative, and concern not duration absolutely, but "time" within eternity, when a certain order of things begins or when it reaches an end. We measure duration so, and call it time. So in relation to matter. Mormonism recognizes the eternity of matter and also eternity of spirit. That matter is uncreated, spirit is also uncreated. These, spirit and matter, are eternal existences, constituting what our Book of Mormon speaks of as "things to act and things to be acted upon" (11 Nephi, 1:10).

Referring back now to the immensity of the universe—to this limitless, heaving, restless ocean of worlds and world-systems—it is inhabited by sentient beings? Or is it inhabited by sentient beings? On this head Sir Robert Ball, one of the leading men of science in England has a most thoughtful passage; and though it would seem to open again the subject of the immensity of the universe on which we have already dwelt over long, still I cannot consent to omit any part of what follows:

"We know of the existence of 30,000,000 of stars or suns, many of them much more magnificent than the one which gives light to our system. The vast majority of them are not visible to the eye, or even recognizable by the teles-

cope, but sensitized photographic plates—which are for this purpose exposed to the light of the stars at a time—have revealed their existence beyond all doubt or question, though most of them are almost inconceivably distant, thousands of tens of thousands of times as far off as our sun. A telegraphic message, for example, which would reach the sun in eight minutes, would not reach some of these stars in 1,000 years. The human mind, of course, does not really conceive such distances, though they can be expressed in formulae, which the human mind has devised, and the bewildering statement is from one point of view singularly depressing. It reduces so greatly the probable importance of man in the universe. It is most improbable, almost impossible, that these great centers of light should have been created to light up nothing, and as they are far too distant to be of use to us, we may fairly accept the hypothesis that each one has a system of planets around it like our own. Taking an average of only 10 planets to each sun, that hypothesis indicates the existence, within the narrow range to which human observation is still confined, of at least 200,000,000 of separate worlds, many of them doubtless of gigantic size, and it is nearly inconceivable that of these worlds can be wholly devoid of living and sentient beings upon them. Granting the, to us, impossible hypothesis that the final cause of the universe is accident, a fortuitous concurrence of self-existent atoms, still the accident which produced thinking beings upon this little and inferior world must have frequently repeated itself; while, if, as we hold, there is a sentient Creator, it is difficult to believe, without a revelation to that effect, that he has wasted such glorious creative power upon mere masses of insensible matter. God cannot love gases. The probability, at least, is that there are millions of worlds—for after all, what the sensitized paper sees must be but an infinitesimal fraction of the whole—occupied by sentient beings."

This is as far as scientific men may go. Our astronomers stand upon earth with their telescopes directed to the planet Mars, which most nearly resembles the physical conditions of our own earth, so far as may be judged, and they speculate as to whether or not Mars is inhabited. And while they thus stand halting, our prophet, through the revelations of God and the inspiration of the Almighty, was in him, proclaimed these worlds and world-systems to be inhabited by the sons and daughters of God. Let me read a passage of Mormon scripture to you:

"There are many kingdoms; for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a